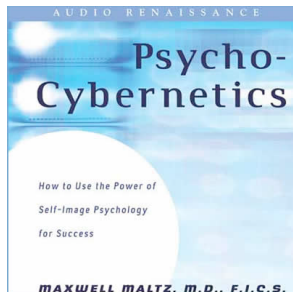


Module 30 – Pillar Seven: Mind Over Matter

Theater of the Mind



I think Dr. Maltz Theater of the Mind is a much better title than Psycho-Cybernetics.

Your subconscious mind can be your best friend or your greatest saboteur.

Psychologists say that at the unconscious level it dictates your actions, your thoughts and even the involuntary functions of your body. Its effects on your overall health are manifold.

Others call the unconscious “the labyrinth of the mind,” which implies that some of its activities are pretty intricate and hidden from us.

Either way, it’s a good idea to be in charge of your mind just as it’s a good idea to be in charge of your body!

If you see yourself as feeling tired or weak, for example, because you didn’t get enough sleep, you may subconsciously end up doing many things that ensure you feel tired. Your posture may slouch. Your breathing may decrease. You forget to drink water. Your mind is simply responding to the message you’ve sent it: “I’m tired.”

I just did that very thing to myself just today. I had “only” 5 hours sleep. By, labelling it “only” 5 hours made me feel that I was already tired. I like to get 7-8 hours so I’ve programmed my mind to demand that amount of sleep. If I don’t get it “the rule” I have about my sleep time is broken.

I woke at 4am, and lay there until I finally got up by 4:30am. Around 8am I felt my left nostril congested, and by 11am I had to have a nap. I’m sitting here editing this module, realizing how I let my mind tell me a “story” about feeling tired and, thus, allowing myself to begin to feel slightly ill. Now that I see the scenario playing out, I’ll put a stop to it, immediately.

When going to bed many people think, “I’m so tired.” No wonder they still feel tired in the morning. The thoughts you think as you drop into the land of sleep have a powerful effect on your life.

Just to be clear, this isn’t about the “Law of Attraction” or a new age “The Secret” approach to life. While I do believe there is a metaphysical aspect to life (“what we sow, so shall we reap”) that’s not what I’m talking about, here.

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Couch Potato Self-Image

Here's an example of what I'm talking about. Let's look at a guy who sees himself as a couch potato, but nonetheless, sets out to go jogging every day because he thinks he should. His routine ends abruptly, as he trips, sprains his ankle, and returns to the couch and TV, where he wanted to be in the first place!

How did he manage to sprain his ankle and get what he wanted? Everyday he visualized himself as being an overweight guy sitting in front of the TV. If he visualized himself running at all, it was in total agony, hating every minute, feeling like a fool as people more fit than he, ran past him.

Then, on his run, he relives his visualization; his heart responds by not pumping as much blood; his lungs respond by not taking in as much oxygen.

He may have stayed up late the night before; he may have dragged himself out of bed without sufficient rest. It's very hard to exercise properly without enough sleep. Yet the image he had of himself lead to actions that made it difficult for him to run for 30 minutes each day.

Finally, as if to prove he shouldn't have been running anyway, stumbling along one morning, he tripped on a curb and sprained his ankle.

Low Self-Esteem

This is the type of behaviour that manifests when our self-image is off kilter. Either, we can't see ourselves being healthier, or, we can't see ourselves enjoying healthy things. This type of behavior is related to self-esteem. We are often hyper-critical of ourselves at a deep level, even if we are not aware of it at a conscious level.

We have an image set in our minds of how healthy we can be, and what we are capable of doing. This image is usually ordained by years of bad habits, and presents a limit beyond which we can't seem to progress. That image can be set by our parents or siblings or other relatives. We think that what happened to them, is destined for us. But none of that has to be true. We are the masters of our own universe, after all.

Dr. Psycho-Cybernetics

In the 1960s, Dr. Maxwell Maltz, a cosmetic surgeon and author of the best-selling self-improvement book *Psycho-Cybernetics*, discovered that his reconstructive surgeries did nothing to cure the insecurities and unhappiness many of his patients were experiencing. He soon realized that how people saw themselves in their own mind was the true cause of their lack of contentment and success in life.

I didn't read the book until the late 80's because the title completely turned me off. I must have had a preconceived notion of psycho-cybernetics that prevented me from exploring it! But when I did read it I saw the power of what Dr. Maltz was saying.

Dr. Maltz also developed a process he called *Theater of the Mind*. Essentially you visualize yourself, as if watching a movie, doing, accomplishing and enjoying those things that you otherwise feel are out of your reach.

If you currently suffer from any health troubles you can use this technique to visualize your life without those health problems. Visualize yourself doing those things which right now you are not able to do because of your health limitations.

You can also use this technique to visualize yourself experiencing improved health (instead of overcoming bad health). It's subtly different from practicing affirmations. By putting yourself in a movie scene, a useful sense of detachment is conferred. You're better able to accept a positive role in an imagined scenario, rather than negating it, as can happen with some affirmations.

This type of visualization can be confused with day-dreaming where you imagine yourself being the hero in some kind of tragedy. That can be a bit uplifting but can be too far-fetched to be useful in your day-to-day life.

Here are a few suggestions for the *Theater of the Mind* that include visualizing yourself:

1. Going about your business with great energy at those times of the day when you usually feel low.
2. Sleeping deeply and waking up refreshed.
3. Preparing, eating and enjoying healthful foods.
4. Sitting down morning and evening to practice meditation, prayer or other tension-releasing periods of silence.
5. Being able to think clearly and produce brilliant results in your line of work.
6. Losing weight if you are overweight and developing the physical appearance you always wanted.

Right Thinking and Will Power Aren't Enough

Right thinking is not enough. Right thinking doesn't happen when your mind is programmed otherwise.

Just consider how many of your actions and thoughts emerge each day from the stories your mind has incorporated. Even reading these words is partly a subconscious activity. You are not consciously decoding each letter and defining each word. It's happening automatically, without conscious thought.

Or, look at the way you react to things that happen in life – your reactions are usually subconscious or automatic.

Sure, you can exercise your willpower and try to override the subconscious thoughts and resulting actions that get in the way of your being healthier. But willpower tends to work best if you are already feeling completely rested, content and stress-free. Otherwise, you won't feel up to forcing your will on some aspect of your life, and you will simply allow your automatic mechanisms to take over.

Have you ever decided you would like to limit a certain food? Everything goes well for a while. Then, challenges and temptations begin to mount, and the next thing you know, your mind has convinced you that you deserve, need, or just might as well give up and have, that which you had decided you would do without.

This is partly because you are still, constantly imagining yourself eating the forbidden food. Your subconscious mind may even guide you into a situation that puts that forbidden food within arms reach.

Theater of the Mind Procedure

Here are the basic *Theater of the Mind* instructions, applied towards improving your health. For more detailed instructions, read Dr. Maxwell's book, *Pyscho–Cybernetics*.

1. Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Dim the lights. Close your eyes. Keep your eyes turned upward, as this will stop you from falling asleep.
2. Tense your body, and then relax completely.
3. Inhale deeply and slowly to your own count, silently. Hold your breath for the same count. Exhale for the same count. Everyone has a different count according to the length of their breath. Repeat this six times. You want to get your mind into a calm, clear and receptive state, so, if you meditate or pray, this would be a good time to practice.
4. First, in great detail, visualize walking into a movie theater . Pick a theater that inspires you. You may prefer an old-fashioned cinema, a Shakespearean style theater or a modern movie theater. It's up to you – it's your imagination. Pay for your ticket. Find a seat.
5. Now, visualize the curtains parting, and either a theatrical production beginning on stage or a movie beginning on a film screen. Start with a "short" film: Visualize a successful effort you have made in the past and the benefits you have reaped. If you've overcome health challenges or have otherwise stuck to a health program, these would be relevant and powerful examples. Otherwise, just pick a time when you successfully achieved a goal you pursued. Relive the experience in great detail, involving all your senses and the good feelings you experienced at the time. This will help get you in the right mood and convince your mind that these experiences and feelings are already within your range of possibility.
6. Now, visualize yourself thinking and acting in such a way to achieve a particular health goal. See yourself performing those actions with all five senses – sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Visualize as many details as you can. Feel yourself doing those actions with joy, contentment and determination.
7. Now, visualize the immediate results you want to experience from your particular health goal. Make sure to feel them fully. If your goal includes more energy, then feel the energy in your body. Use your imagination. If you currently have pain, feel harmony in that area of your body. It is amazing what you can experience in the land of imagination with a little practice.
8. Next, visualize the secondary benefits of your health goal. Visualize yourself doing and achieving those things that you currently cannot do because of your physical limitations. Better health can improve every aspect of your life, so you can have a lot of fun running multiple "spin-offs" in your mind: a pay raise at work, better sex, playing sports with your kids, running a marathon, helping other people.
9. You can then spend time meditating or praying in silence. The longer you sit after the visualization the more impact it will have. When it is time to get up, do it slowly, and don't talk too quickly. Carry the feeling of confidence you gained from the *Theater of the Mind* experience with you. If your visualization session is at bedtime, when you are through, most likely, you will, quickly, drift off to sleep.

Reprogramming Your Thoughts and Beliefs

As you probably realize, there's a bit of disconnection between the conscious and subconscious minds. The conscious mind says "I will not drink coffee anymore." The subconscious mind only knows that every morning you drink a big cup of coffee. It's like a computer program that has been set to go off every morning at 7am to make you a cup of coffee. When it's met with resistance from the conscious mind, it continues to operate, trying to find some way to get that cup of coffee.

If, instead, you visualize yourself as someone who not only doesn't drink coffee (or at least not often) but, otherwise doesn't really care for it, then your subconscious mind would work differently. You would, essentially, reprogram it. You'd override the instructions that say you are supposed to have a cup of coffee at 7am.

After all, a habit is just something you've been doing for a long time and it can be replaced by a habit of not doing that thing!

As you can see, you can use the *Theater of the Mind* method to override "bad programs" and create "good ones." Generally, I'd recommend doing both at the same time.

Don't visualize yourself not having the cup of coffee; visualize yourself feeling invigorated by a different beverage or food.

Or, visualize yourself getting more sleep so you don't feel the need for coffee.

Or, visualize yourself getting up thirty minutes early so you can exercise outdoors – invigorated by fresh air instead of stimulated by caffeine.

Amazingly, your mind really can't tell the difference between reality and imagination. Everything is just incoming signals. It will just go with the strongest images that contain the strongest feelings (good or bad).

A belief is just a thought that you've been thinking for a long time. Override the belief that you are a coffee drinker with the belief that you are a water, tea, and juice drinker instead!

Make It Happen

The instructions for Theater of the Mind are on page 5. It may seem like a lot of words but once you have read that page a few times you'll be able to practice the technique very easily. The best times to practice are upon waking or just before going to sleep. This is when you have the easiest access to your subconscious mind, when your conscious mind is not in full gear.

If you can't practice at both times, then before bed is optimal. Studies have shown that most of the reprogramming of the subconscious mind takes place while you are sleeping. This is why when learning a new skill, it's always easier on the second day than it was on the first day.

But if you're on a monotonous car, bus, train or plane ride, you can easily slip into your theatre. Don't do this if you are the designated driver!

Don't be surprised if this process brings you face to face with "inner scars" that have been doing more than just sabotaging your health. Every physical limitation is said to be linked to a subconscious thought pattern. Sometimes these thought patterns are deeply engraved in the mind.

It may many visits to the *Theater of Your Mind* to rewrite your programming and experience the health you want. Or it could also take only minutes. Dive in and be the first to find out about your new life.

Questions and Answers

What if some "stuff" (psychological or emotional baggage) comes up that I don't want to face?

Write it down, talk to someone, a trusted friend, relative or psychologist. The key to a healthy mind is expressing your fears and feelings, and not keeping them buried. It's unresolved conflicts that feed our worries and transfer worry into bodily symptoms. So, expressing yourself and your feelings is the best way to stay emotionally and physically healthy.

Until Next Week

Remember, if you don't think you can do EVERYTHING that I outline in the Future Health Now! modules, don't worry. I don't expect you to! Even if you just do 20% you'll probably see 80% of the results you are looking for.

When you use the *Theater of the Mind* technique, and see yourself taking positive actions to improve your health, it's as if it has already happened. And, in your mind's perspective, you've already achieved your health goals. The technique eliminates feelings of self-pity, frustration and discouragement – emotions that only get in the way of your goals.

Each day, for the remainder of the Future Health Now! Program, go into the *Theater of the Mind* and visualize yourself doing the action items and enjoying the process of healthy living. Most importantly, see yourself reaping the rewards of a healthy lifestyle. Make it a reality now, in your subconscious, and watch how it becomes a reality in the "real" world.

Thanks for participating in Future Health Now! I hope you have been able to implement some of the strategies that I send each week. It will make all the difference in your future health if you do.

Coming Up In Module 31

Let's explore *Liver Snacks*. It's all about how to have sugar all day long and not get fat. And processed sugar at that! Have I lost my mind? I'll say no more. You'll find out next week!

If you have any questions about this module email me at help@drcarolyndean.com



Disclaimer: The entire contents of this document are based upon the opinions of Dr. Carolyn Dean – unless otherwise noted. This document is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is a sharing of information from the 40+ years of research and experience of Dr. Dean. Dr. Dean encourages you to make your own health care decisions based upon your own research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.

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